POINT OF VIEW

Galveston, Texas, and Farragut Square, Washington, D.C.: Places of Hispanic Heritage

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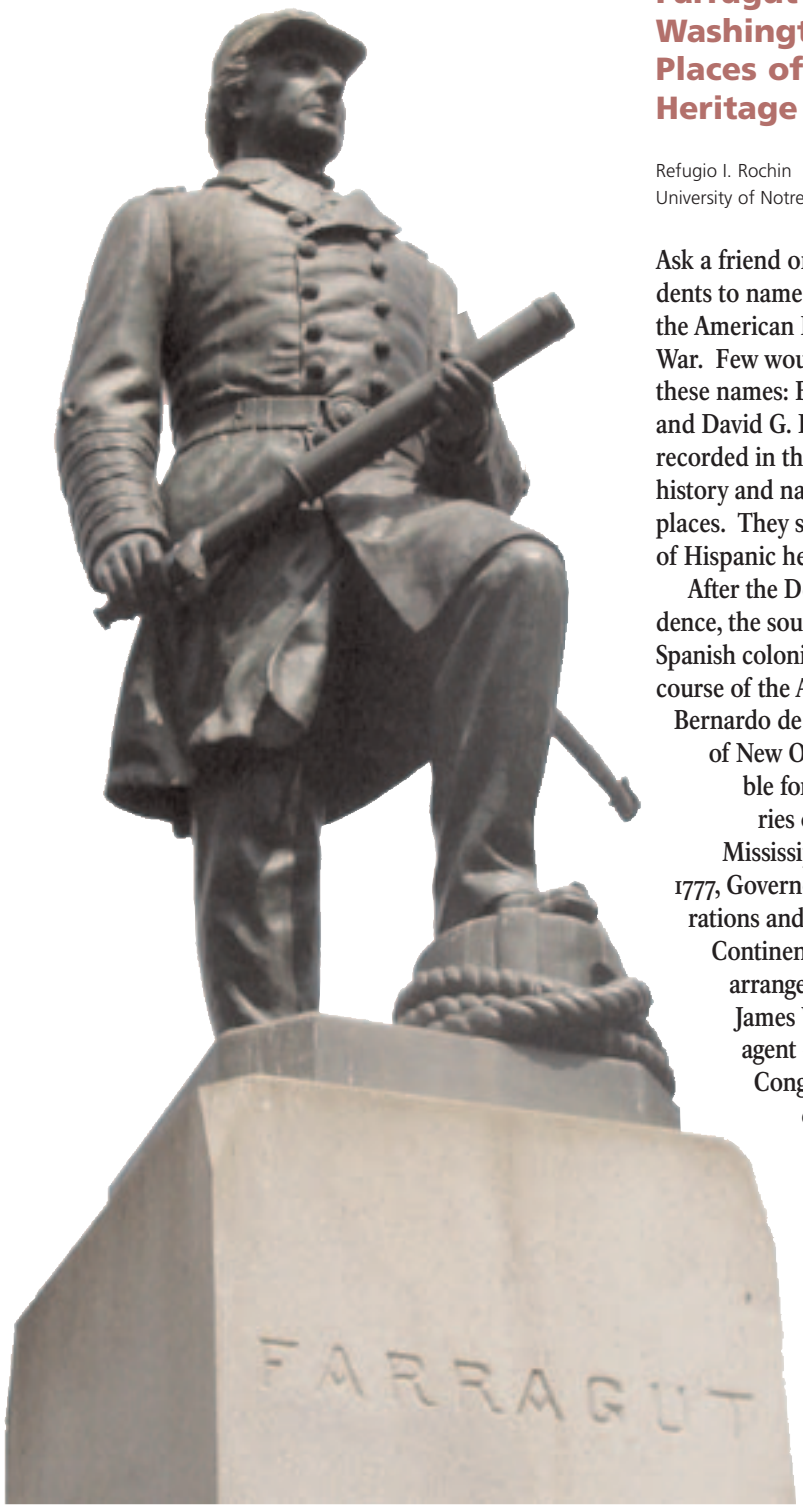
Ask a friend or a classroom of students to name a Hispanic hero of the American Revolution or the Civil War. Few would probably mention these names: Bernardo de Gálvez and David G. Farragut. Both are recorded in the annals of American history and names for famous places. They share a common bond of Hispanic heritage.

After the Declaration of Independence, the southern populations of Spanish colonists followed the course of the American Revolution. Bernardo de Gálvez, the Governor of New Orleans, was responsible for the Spanish territories of Louisiana and the Mississippi River. From 1775-1777, Governor de Gálvez provided rations and weapons to the Continental Army, and he arranged safe passage for James Willing, an American agent of the Continental Congress, who led a successful campaign along the Mississippi River harassing British shipping, plantation owners, and military outposts.

After the colonists scored a stunning victory at Saratoga, New York, in 1778, Spain declared war against Britain on June 21, 1779. Governor de Gálvez took up the charge and organized a militia of American Indians, freed African-Americans, and led Spanish soldiers to attack British-held forts at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Fort Manchac, located south of Baton Rouge, and Fort Panmure, at Natchez, Mississippi. On March 14, 1780, de Gálvez took Mobile, Alabama, and, on May 10 1781, gained the formal surrender of Pensacola, Florida, from the British. Governor de Galvez's military successes marked the end of the British threat on the western and southern fringes of the colonies. Thus, de Gálvez contributed to the cause of the American Revolution with a handful of victories, friendship of the Indians, aid to colonial fighters, and control of the Mississippi. Galveston, Texas, once called "Galveztown" as early as 1789, takes its name from the revolutionary hero.

A well-known name in Washington, D.C., not recognized as Hispanic, is Admiral David Glasgow Farragut (FAR-uh-guht). Farragut Square, in the capital city is named after him. The square contains a prominent statue of the admiral, designating him as a Civil War hero. He was born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1801. His father, Jorge Farragut, came to the American colonies from the Spanish island of Minorca. He joined the Carolina Navy, became a lieutenant and fought the British at Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina. David was named James at birth. After his mother's death, young Farragut, with the consent of his father, was adopted by



***Hispanic patriot Admiral Farragut** is best remembered for shouting the order, "Damn the torpedos! Full speed ahead." Today he stands guard over one of Washington, DC's most popular city squares, named in his honor. His father, Jorge, hailed from the Spanish island of Minorca.*
Photo by Marcia Axtmann Smith.

A frank and meaningful interchange about controversial subjects is possible only when the presenter has gained the trust and respect of the audience. Photo courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Navy Captain David Porter, and took the name David in Porter's honor.

When David was nine years old he was appointed a midshipman in the U.S. Navy on Captain Porter's ship. At 11 years of age, he served aboard the U.S.S. *Essex* during the War of 1812. He later fought pirates in the Caribbean region and in the war with Mexico, 1846-48. It was his victory at Mobile Bay, Alabama on August 5, 1864 where his fame was solidified. After seeing the ironclad U.S.S. *Tecumseh* sunk by floating "torpedoes" of "gunpowder in barrels," Farragut took command with his wooden vessel and shouted this famous order: "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" Other ships followed this brave leader and soon captured the ironclad Confederate *Tennessee* and the fort defending Mobile. This southern port was in Union control for the remainder of the war. On July 26, 1866, Farragut was named the Navy's first full admiral by President Abraham Lincoln, a rank awarded to him by the U.S. Congress after victories against the Confederate forces on the Gulf of Mexico, in New Orleans, and along the Mississippi River.

The destroyer U.S.S. *Farragut* carries a plaque summarizing his life. The Naval Academy's library and museum contain many of Admiral Farragut's memorabilia, including his signature under his oath as a cadet, signed on December 19, 1810, when he was nine years old.

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Tackling Tough Topics at Colonial Williamsburg

Mark M. Howell

In one chair, a man waits to become a slave owner. Another man next to him waits to become enslaved. Both will be interviewed during a videoconference with hundreds of 4th-6th graders studying this grim reality of our nation's history. "Chained to the Land," part of the Colonial Williamsburg Electronic Field Trip program, which broadcasts six hour-long programs each year via satellite to public television and schools.

The Electronic Field Trip program expands Colonial Williamsburg's educational reach beyond the physical confines of Williamsburg and connects with schools that cannot travel to the museum. Subscribing schools receive preprogram materials, have the opportunity to call and e-mail questions to the program, and later participate in a survey. The program's story is broken into three segments. During the story and at its end, there are breaks where kids can call in and talk to prominent characters in the story and a staff historian. A bank of about 30 edu-

cators mans the phones and computers to respond to those questions that do not make it onto the air.

In "Chained to the Land," the story deals with a wealthy planter deciding to sell some of his livestock and slaves to pay off some pressing debts. The story shows the implications on both whites and blacks living on the plantation. Although the "electronic field trips" have been available for six years and the subject of slavery has been a topic on several occasions, it is the first time this script has been presented.

Not so long ago, such a project would have met with trepidation from the intended audience as well as the participants. Difficult subjects—slavery, religion, ethnicity, or politics—cause some level of apprehension. The recent history of public programming at Colonial Williamsburg is an example. The interpretation of the realities of life for all of Virginia's inhabitants has been met with both skepticism and apprehension from various sections of the population. And yet, organizations committed to the public's trust are obliged to address these issues, no matter how painful or uncomfortable they may be. It is the only way to continually ensure that trust.

There is no simple solution to presenting controversial issues. The thoughtful and sincere presentation of difficult subjects demonstrates a commitment to an earnest and scholarly analysis of the past, warts and all. In developing an exhibit, public program or live interpretation that includes a controversial topic, one should consider these points:

- Involvement of those parties affected by the topic you are considering presenting.
- Commitment of the organization's leadership once advice, suggestions, encouragement, and reservations have been gathered.
- Training the staff in content, sensitivity, and interpretive technique to ensure the effective presentation of controversial topics.

Presenting controversial topics is not easy. But investing the necessary time and money into such an initiative speaks volumes as to the institution's credibility and maturity when it comes to being perceived as a responsible steward of the past.

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Cuban Diaspora: The Washington Community

Caridad de la Vega
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

The United States and Cuba are geographically close, only 90 miles apart, and share a strong historical past. The Cuban American Friendship Urn stands as a tribute to those intimate historical connections. Located in Washington, DC, in Potomac Park, at the intersections of 14th Street and Ohio Drive, NW, the Friendship Urn commemorates the American lives lost in the explosion of the battleship U.S.S. *Maine* "and the friendships and bonds between Cuba and the United States." The urn sat atop a marble column in Havana, Cuba, until a hurricane in 1926 felled the column. Cuba then added a marble plinth to the urn and sent it to the United States to rest outside the Cuban Embassy. The memorial was relocated to its current place when relations between the two countries deteriorated after the ascension of Communist leader Fidel Castro in 1959.

Cuban immigration to the United States is traditionally viewed in the post-1959 waves of political exiles—or immigrants—who fled Cuba after Castro's ascension to power. However, the Cuban-American Friendship Urn is a reminder of those Cubans that resided in the United States prior to the 1959 exodus, particularly during the turbulent decades of the 1880s and 1890s when Cubans struggled to liberate themselves from Spanish rule.

Washington comprises one of fourteen major metropolitan cities within the United States where Cubans and Cuban-Americans reside. Cubans have a vibrant historical past in Washington that predates the Castro regime. Not only did they already have a community, albeit a small one, but the people within them shared bonds that unite the history of one community of Cubans with another. The pre-Castro group was demographically different from those Cubans who would arrive in higher proportions after Castro's rise into power. With its lack of heavy industry, the Washington community cannot be compared with the Miami, Tampa, and New York communities. It had no "single" geographically bounded ethnic enclave. Adams-Morgan in the District, Barcroft and Arlington in Virginia, and Takoma Park and Rockville in Maryland represent the nuclei of the Cuban community.

In spite of the dispersed nature of the Washington Cuban community, they have managed to maintain networks of communication with other fellow Cubans. The existence of an already established Spanish-speaking community functioned as a natural attraction for the Cuban exiles that settled in the Columbia Road area, the heart of the Adams-Morgan neighborhood. The Latino presence was primarily composed of embassy employees, professionals, domestic employees, and Latin American students in area universities. Additionally, Cubans were

among the multiple Latino groups that were immigrating into the area during the 1960s, when the local Latino population was on the rise.

Washington Cubans have been successful in maintaining their cultural integrity and heritage amidst other Latin American groups and immigrant communities with the creation and development of cultural organizations and local businesses to serve their particular needs. Cubans established some of the earliest Latino businesses in the Adams-Morgan area. However, the selectivity of the immigrants and the presence of a Latino community upon their arrival were two crucial factors that facilitated the successful adjustment of the Cuban immigrants.

Hispanics recently became the largest minority group within the United States. The presence of 37 million Latinos underscores the need to engage the history of these communities in order to assess the historical impact that their presence has occasioned within the larger context of American history. The Cuban-American Friendship Urn reminds us that although Latinos have only recently become a dominant presence, there is a deep-seated history often not acknowledged or recognized.

The Cuban-American Friendship Urn, *also known as the "Maine Memorial," commemorates the military, political, and historical bonds between the United States and Cuba as a result of the Spanish-American War. It is located in Potomac Park in Washington, DC.* *Photo by Marcia Axtmann Smith.*

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Where's Smokey? *A curious connection between Sioux Tribe members and the World War II effort. See page 4.*

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